Glossary From Secrets Of The Gem Trade

achroic Without color; a colorless gemstone.

achromatic As above

adularescence A phenomenal effect; e.g., the billowing "moonglow" effect in moonstone.

akoya pearl A pearl from the saltwater akoya-gai oyster (Pinctada martensii); "Japanese pearl."

baroque Any pearl that is not symmetrical, round, or teardrop, oval, or button shaped.

bead nucleation The use of a shell bead, usually spherical, implanted in the oyster to stimulate the growth of a cultured pearl, and forming the center of the pearl.

bellied Describing a stone purposely cut with extra weight around the girdle, yielding a bulbous outline.

bicolor A stone with two distinct, separate hues, common in tourmaline.

bleed color The loss of saturation and tone when the viewing environment is shifted between natural and incandescent lighting.

body color The color of light transmitted through a gem, as distinguished from key color, the color of refracted light.

brilliance The total quantity of light refracted and reflected (from a gemstone) back to the eye of the viewer.

brilliant cut Usually refers to a full-cut brilliant of fifty-eight facets, with thirty-two facets and table above the girdle, twenty-four facets and a culet below; used almost universally in cutting larger round diamonds.

byewater Off-color; poor color and transparency; see also water.

"buying the cert" A purchase based not on an analysis of the beauty of the stone, but on the language of the grading report (certificate).

cabochon, en cabochon Gem with a rounded top, without facets. French, "little head."

carat Unit of weight in gemstones, one-fifth of a metric gram

cat's-eye Phenomenal effect in cabochon cut gemstones resembling the iris of a cat's eye.

clarity One of the "four Cs" of quality grading, referring to the presence or absence of inclusions or flaws.

color See body color, key color.

crown The top half of a faceted gemstone; the portion above the girdle.

crystal One of the "four Cs" of gem connoisseurship, coined by author, referring to the transparency and diaphaneity of the gem. See also water and transparency.

culet The point at the very bottom of the pavilion of a gemstone.

cut The style in which a gem has been fashioned; e.g., emerald cut, brilliant cut. Also refers to a gem's proportions; e.g., well cut.

daystone A term coined by the author to describe a gem species or variety or single stone that looks its best in natural daylight.

diaphaneity The property of being transparent or translucent.

dichroic Of two colors; the characteristic of a transparent substance to divide refracted white light into two distinct rays.

diffraction The modification of white light as it breaks up into the color spectrum.

dispersion The division of white light into its constituent components as in light through a prism; the rainbow effect.

dog A poor quality gemstone in a parcel.

drusy Tiny quartz crystals growing on the surface of a gemstone.

en cameo Cut in relief. Opposite of cutting intaglio.

enhancement Any process applied to a gemstone to improve its color or clarity; also heat enhancement, burning, cooking; see also treatment.

extinction The dark gray to black portion of a face-up gemstone that does not refract light; usually caused by off-axis refraction.

eye The finest gemstone in a parcel.

eye-clean, eye-flawless Describing a gem with no inclusions when viewed with the naked eye (assumes 20/20 vision).

eye-visible Inclusions visible to the eye without magnification.

face up The view of a gem from the top or crown.

fancy color In diamond, any color other than colorless viewed face up; in diamond any color is a fancy color.

fish-eye A dark gray to black (achroic) spot at the center of the gem caused by improper proportions from poor cutting; see also extinction.